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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
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09/240,053 01/29/99 BOWMAN

C PROGRID

022191 TM02/0702
GREENBERG-TRAURIG
1750 TYSONS BOULEVARD, 12TH FLOOR
MCLEAN VA 22102

EXAMINER

KALINOWSKI, A

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2166

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07/02/01

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary

Application No. 09/240,053 Applicant(s)

Bowman

Examiner Alexander Kalinowski

Art Unit 2166



-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136 (a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on Jan 29, 1999

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claims _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

13) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).

a) All b) Some* c) None of:

- Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
- Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
- Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

15) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 18) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____

16) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 19) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

17) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). 4 20) Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-20 are presented for examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

As to claim 1, the claimed limitation of “transforming physical media into a chart ..” is indefinite. It is unclear as to which physical media is being transformed into the chart. Does the limitation refer to drawing the chart on paper? Or is the transformation step directed to drawing a y axis and an x axis on paper? For purposes of applying prior art to the claims, the Examiner interprets this limitation to mean drawing a y axis and x axis on paper.

Claims 2-20 are rejected on the same basis as claim 1 due to their dependency to claim 1.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Blake et al., "The Managerial Grid"(hereinafter The Managerial Grid) .

As for claim 1, applicant cites a method of evaluating an intangible asset of interest which comprises the steps of: establishing first and second variables related to the value of the intangible asset of interest; establishing a series of performance criteria statements for the value of the first and second variables; scoring each of said performance criteria statements; summing a plurality of scores to generate first and second total scores based upon the extent to which individual statements accurately describe the intangible asset of interest; transforming physical media into a chart having a first and second axes each of which relates to one of the variables; physically plotting a point on the chart at the location that corresponds to the first and second total scores and using the chart in making a decision regarding the value of the intangible asset of interest.

The Managerial Grid discloses two variables (concern for people and concern for production); various criteria statements (the five statements shown in Fig. 1); first and second scores (1,1; 9,9; 1,9 etc.); a chart with two axes each relating to one of the variables (concern for people and concern for production) and plotting a point on the chart corresponding to the first and second total scores (1,1; 9,9; 1,9 etc.).

The Managerial Grid does not teach the use of the chart in making a decision regarding the value of the asset. However, the Examiner takes official notice that it was well known in the

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statistical arts that graphical illustrations are used to represent data in order to create a user friendly illustration or depiction of abstract data and data trends and to facilitate decision making. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have utilized The Managerial Grid for decision making regarding the value of an asset for the motivation stated above.

As for claim 2, applicant further claims the generating step as comprising: choosing criteria statements which most closely describe the asset being evaluated, determining first and second scores for each of the criteria statements and summing the scores for the first and second variables. The Managerial Grid discloses the use of criteria statements and scores of each of these statements with respect to each of the variables.

As for claim 3, applicant further cites the method of assigning first and second weighing factors reflecting the extent of impact of the criteria statements on the first and second variables and using the weighing factors in determining first and second total scores. The weighing of the factors with respect to each of the variables is implied in The Managerial Grid.

As for claim 4, applicant cites a method of placing a label in each of the four quadrants of the chart of claim 1 to represent the extent to which points in a quadrant reflect balance between the first and second variables. The Examiner takes official notice that it was well known in the

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statistical arts that the quadrants of a graph provide an indication of the comparative value of each of two variables which define the axis of the graph. Such labeling provides a key as to what that area of the graph represents and it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include this feature within the Managerial Grid for the motivation stated above.

As for claim 5, applicant cites the use of independent variables for the first and second variables. The Managerial Grid uses two independent variables.

As for claims 6-17, applicant cites the various types of assets being evaluated and a corresponding set of variables for each of these assets. The Managerial Grid does not explicitly disclose this feature.

However, the Managerial Grid discloses evaluating a specific asset and a corresponding set of variables for the specified asset related to the performance of an organization or asset (i.e. Management's concerns for production versus management's concerns for its employees)(see The Managerial Grid). It would have been an obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have utilized The Managerial Grid for evaluating other types of assets that are related to the performance or value of the asset in order to customize the Grid for particular preferences and/or needs of the user of the system.

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As for claim 18, applicant cites a chart created by the method of claim 1 for providing a graphical indication of the value of an intangibles asset of interest.

The use of graphical illustrations to represent data was well known in the art and this limitation was previously discussed in claim 1 above.

6. Claims 19-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over The Managerial Grid as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Turnbull, Peter, "A Review of Portfolio Planning Models for Industrial Marketing and Purchasing Management"(hereinafter Turnbull).

As to claim 19, The Managerial Grid does not explicitly disclose the method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

calculating the future value of an intangible asset by iterating said scoring, summing, transforming, and plotting steps using new rating levels, determined through a code in the format x, y, z where x is a number of improvement steps which the asset is likely to achieve if its current position is at a lowest performance level, y is a number of improvement steps that the asset is likely to achieve if its current position is at a next highest performance level, and z is a number of improvement steps the asset is likely to achieve if its current position is at a next highest performance level.

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However, Turnbull discloses a system of strategic planning that enables management to assess by graphic representation the current position of a company, the projected future position of a company and the desired future position of a company (see abstract and page 7). Turnbull further discloses generating future business portfolios (i.e. calculating the future value of the intangible asset) based on project trends of the factors considered in order to identify major strategic issues facing the company (see page 12, last two paragraphs). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include calculating the future value of an intangible asset by iterating said scoring, summing, transforming, and plotting steps using new rating levels, determined through a code in the format x, y, z where x is a number of improvement steps which the asset is likely to achieve if its current position is at a lowest performance level, y is a number of improvement steps that the asset is likely to achieve if its current position is at a next highest performance level, and z is a number of improvement steps the asset is likely to achieve if its current position is at a next highest performance level within the Managerial Grid in order to identify major strategic decisions facing the company (page 12, last paragraph).

As to claim 20, The Managerial Grid does not explicitly disclose the method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

repeating said steps of establishing, scoring, summing, transforming, and plotting for a plurality of intangible assets of interest, whereby said chart is caused

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to show a plurality of points corresponding to said plurality of intangible assets of interest.

However, Turnbull discloses a system of strategic planning that enables management to assess by graphic representation the current position of a company, the projected future position of a company and the desired future position of a company (see abstract and page 7). Turnbull further discloses repeating said steps of establishing, scoring, summing, transforming, and plotting for a plurality of intangible assets of interest, whereby said chart is caused to show a plurality of points corresponding to said plurality of intangible assets of interest (i.e. the company is divided into strategic business units (SBUs) which are positioned on the business screen against two corporate dimensions)(see GEC's Nine Cell Strategic Business Screen, pages 13 and 14). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to include repeating said steps of establishing, scoring, summing, transforming, and plotting for a plurality of intangible assets of interest, whereby said chart is caused to show a plurality of points corresponding to said plurality of intangible assets of interest within The Managerial Grid in order to identify major strategic decisions facing the company (page 12, last paragraph).

Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

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- a. Pat. No. 5,784,696 discloses selecting investment portfolios based on investment risk and risk adjusted returns.
- b. JP 10333548 A1 discloses a graphical method for improving company performance by comparing it against others in a specific industry.
- c. "Trade-Off in Business Decisions" discloses a graphical method for evaluating business performance.
- d. "PC support to help track your team's goals and progress" discloses a computer based system that monitors team activities and measures results against target objectives.
- e. "Importance-Satisfaction analysis: A diagnostic tool for organizational change" discloses a graphical managerial/consulting tool used in formulating marketing strategy.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alexander Kalinowski, whose telephone number is (703) 305-2398. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Thursday from 8:30 AM to 6:00 PM. In addition, the examiner can be reached on alternate Fridays.

If any attempt to reached the examiner by telephone is unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz, can be reached on (703) 305-9643. The fax telephone number for this group is (703) 305-0040.

Alexander Kalinowski *akl*

6/30/2001


TARIQ R. HAFIZ
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100